

## CHAPTER 6

### COMMON CAUTIONARY SITUATIONS

#### 1) MILITARY OPERATIONS

The U.S. Armed Forces frequently conducts missile firing, bombing, and other hazardous operations on the navigable waters of the United States. Information concerning these operations is disseminated via Local and Broadcast Notices to Mariners when the Coast Guard is advised. Notices will refer to areas, zones, and lanes as shown on National Ocean Survey Charts. If operations are conducted outside of charted areas, zones, or lanes, their locations will be described by ranges and bearings from charted objects or by latitude and longitude.

Although information provided to the Coast Guard is published in Local Notice to Mariners, there may be times when operations are conducted without the Coast Guard being notified.

For information regarding the areas in which hazardous operations are conducted, mariners are referred to Chapter 2 of the United States Coast Pilot 7, Pacific Coast: California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii, 31st Edition.

#### 2) MINE-CLEARANCE OPERATIONS

United States vessels engaged in mine-clearance operations or exercises are hampered to a considerable extent in their ability to maneuver.

All vessels towing sweeps are to show: **BY DAY**--A black ball at the fore truck and a ball at the end of each fore yard. **BY NIGHT**--All around green lights, one at the fore truck and at the end of each fore yard.

These signals indicate that it is dangerous to approach within 1,000 meters (approximately 1100 yards), of the mine clearance vessels. Under no circumstances should a vessel pass through a formation of minesweepers.

#### 3) SUBMARINE OPERATIONS

Boundary limits and designations of submarine operating areas are shown on charts in magenta or purple lines. As submarines may be operating in these areas, vessels should proceed with caution. During torpedo practice firing, all vessels are cautioned to keep well clear of naval target vessels flying a large red (Bravo) flag.

#### 4) GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYING VESSELS

A survey vessel towing a submerged seismic cable can pose a hazard to navigation. The cable is generally towed at a depth of 15 to 40 feet below the surface, with an overall length up to two miles or more. The end of the cable, if depth and length warrant, is marked by a "tail buoy" displaying either a fixed or flashing white light and often equipped with a radar reflector. A survey vessel towing a submerged cable is required to exhibit lights/dayshapes as prescribed in Rules 24 (Towing and Pushing) and 27 (Restricted Maneuverability) of the Inland and International Navigation Rules as appropriate.

#### 5) MARINE CONSTRUCTION SITES

Information concerning dredging or construction of breakwaters, piers, pipelines, and marine platforms is disseminated via Local and/or Broadcast Notices to Mariners.

The Vessel Bridge to Bridge Radiotelephone Act and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Regulations require dredges and floating plants engaged in or near a channel or fairway, in operations likely to restrict or affect navigation of other vessels, to have a radiotelephone capable of transmitting and receiving VHF-FM channel 13 (156.65 MHz).

#### 6) OIL DRILLING STRUCTURES AND VESSELS

Information concerning the establishment, change, or discontinuance of oil drilling structures and vessels, including anchor and mooring buoys, is disseminated via Local and Broadcast Notice to Mariners when the Coast Guard is advised. The anchoring system of a drilling vessel may extend to 5000 feet from the vessel. Buoys marking the limit of the drilling vessel's anchoring system should be equipped with orange and white vertical or horizontal bands, orange reflective material and white lights flashing every four seconds.

## 7) UNITED STATES SUBMARINE CABLE ACT

The provisions of the United States Submarine Cable Act (47 USC Sections 21-39) make it a federal offense to damage a submarine cable. This act also requires the master of a vessel to keep his gear at least one nautical mile from a vessel engaged in laying or repairing a submarine cable.

**Commercial fisherman and other seabed users may contact AT&T by calling (800) 235-CHARTS for free charts showing cable areas.** Have your vessel name and documentation number ready.  
**WARNING: Most modern submarine telecommunications cables carry up to 8,000 volts. Any attempts to cut the cable or untangle gear could be lethal.**

## 8) WARNING: EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE

The coastal waters of California contain many forms of unexploded ordnance (military weapons), and while some ordnance hazard areas are designated on nautical charts, many unexploded ordnance locations are not known.

If an object is snagged or netted and the object cannot be immediately identified as a non-explosive device then it **MUST BE TREATED AS AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE**. If such an object is brought to the surface and cannot be identified, **DO NOT BRING IT ON BOARD OR ALONGSIDE YOUR VESSEL**. If possible, release the object immediately and radio the nearest Coast Guard or Navy unit and give your position and a description of the object. If the object cannot be released, or freed by cutting the net or line, the following actions are advised:

- a) Stream the object as far aft as possible.
- b) Radio the nearest Coast Guard or Navy unit and stand by for instructions or assistance.
- c) Position the crew as far forward as possible, keeping the deckhouse between them and the object astern.
- d) Maintain steerageway as necessary to stay in the area until assistance or instructions arrive.

If a suspicious object is not detected until the trawl or contents of the net have been discharged on board your vessel, the following actions are advised:

- a) Avoid any bump or shock to the object.
- b) Secure it in place against movement.
- c) Keep it covered and wet.
- d) Radio the nearest Coast Guard or Navy unit and stand by for instructions or assistance.
- e) Position the crew as far from the object as possible.

## 9) WARNING: POSSIBLE DANGER FROM UNLABELED DRUMS

If any unlabeled drums or canisters are seen floating, avoid direct contact and notify the U.S. Coast Guard **(24 hr. TOLL FREE reporting number 1 (800) 424-8802)**.

## 10) ALPHA FLAG FOR DIVING OPERATIONS

A rigid replica of the International Code Flag "A" (ALPHA) at least one meter in height is required for small vessels restricted in their ability to maneuver and engaged in diving operations under Rule 27(e)(ii) of the Inland and International Rules (72 COLREGS). At night and during periods of reduced visibility, three all round lights, the top and bottom light red and the middle light white, are required in lieu of the "A" flag.

## 11) DIVER DOWN FLAG FOR CALIFORNIA STATE WATERS

In addition to the rigid replica alpha flag requirements, the State of California authorizes vessel operators, **in state waters**, to show the traditional divers flag, a red square with a white diagonal stripe to signify divers down. The display of this flag is not mandatory, and in no way substitutes for display of the "A" flag or required lighting.

## 12) MARINE PROTECTION RESEARCH AND SANCTUARIES ACT OF 1972

Title 1 of the **Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972** (Public Law 92-532) makes it unlawful to transport from the United States any material for the purpose of dumping, or the dumping of any material into the oceans, territorial sea, or contiguous zone of the United States, unless the person engaged in such transport or dumping has first obtained a permit from the Environmental Protection Agency. Permits for the transportation and dumping of dredge spoils are issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Information concerning the application for permits issued under this Act may be obtained in Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 220-227 or from:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
75 Hawthorne  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 744-1500

## 13) NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES

National Marine Sanctuaries have been established to protect and preserve marine birds and mammals, their habitats, and other natural resources in the waters surrounding the Northern Channel Islands, Monterey Bay, the Farallon Islands and Cordell Bank, and to ensure the continued availability of these areas for research and recreation. **Recreational use of these areas is encouraged.** The following activities are generally prohibited in these areas:

- a) Hydrocarbon operations.
- b) Discharge of substances.
- c) Alteration of, or construction on, the seabed.
- d) Disturbing marine mammals and birds.
- e) Removing or damaging historical or cultural resources.

Requests for copies of the regulations governing these areas can be obtained by writing to:

Chief Sanctuary Programs Division (N/ORM2)  
Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
3300 Whitehaven Street, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20235

## 14) CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY BOUNDARIES

The sanctuary encompasses the waters within 6 miles of Santa Barbara Island and the northern Channel Islands (Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and San Miguel Islands), including Castle and Richardson Rocks.

## 15) CORDELL BANK / FARALLON ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY BOUNDARIES

The sanctuaries consist of more than 1000 square nautical miles of water adjacent to the California Coast, north of San Francisco. The coastal boundaries follow the seaward limit of Point Reyes National Seashore and the mean high tide line between Bodega Head (Sonoma County) and Rocky Point (Marin County). The seaward boundaries extend twelve nautical miles offshore and encompass all the waters encircling the Farallon Islands within twelve nautical miles.

## 16) MONTEREY BAY

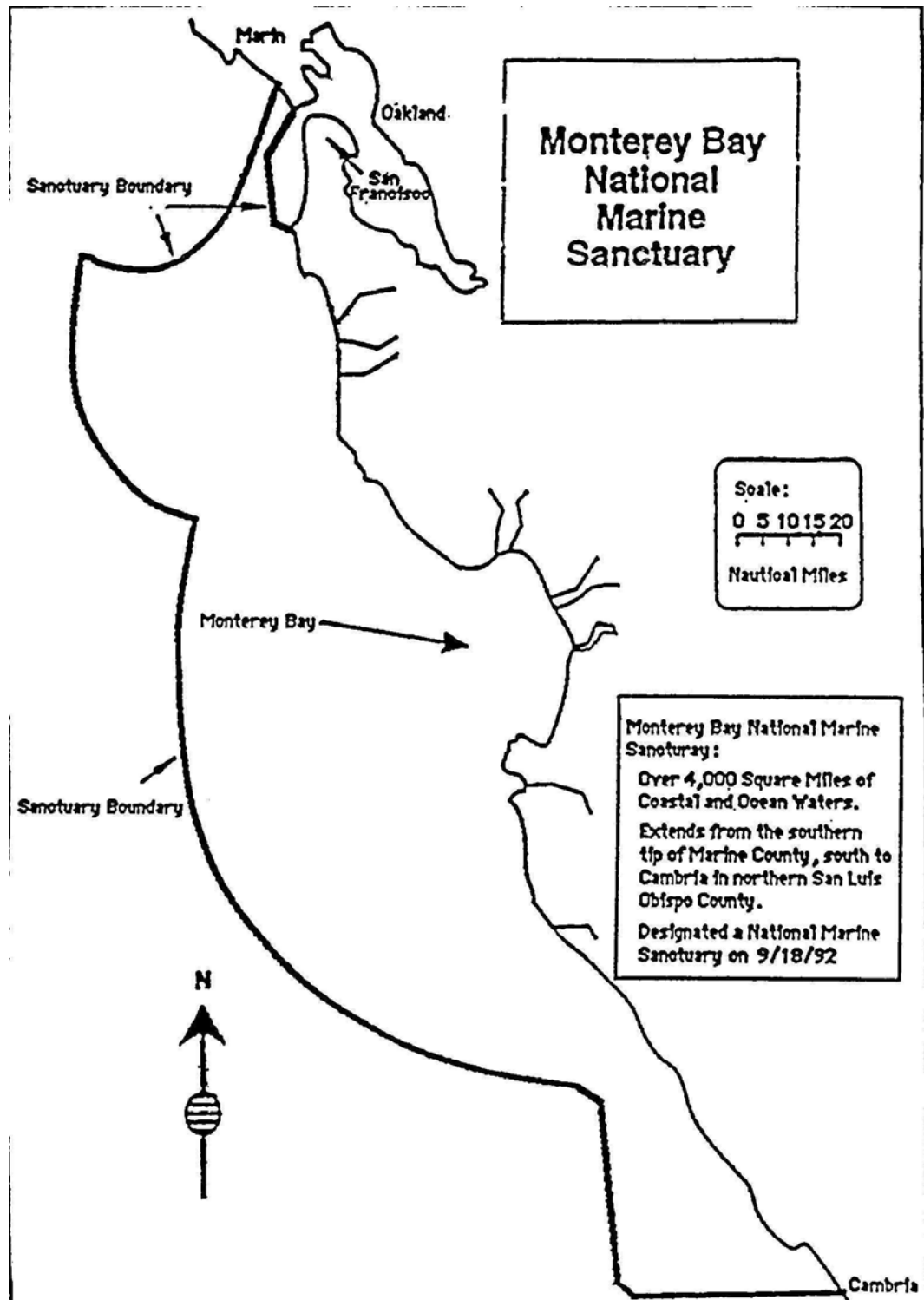
The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the largest by volume of its kind in the country, includes over 5000 square miles of coastal and ocean waters off the central California coast. It spans over 300 miles of coastline from Cambria to Point Reyes, and extends as much as 50 miles offshore. The area was given sanctuary protection in recognition of its dramatic underwater geology and topography, its floral and faunal diversity, its abundant and distinct commercial fishery, and its standing as an important research site. Monterey Bay itself supports diverse bird species and several endangered marine mammals, including the California gray whale, humpback whale, and the California sea otter.

Virtually all vessel types, including tankers, container ships, towing vessels, fishing vessels, and recreational craft currently transit the sanctuary. However, to enhance protection of the sensitive marine environments in the sanctuary, IMO has adopted a set of Recommended Tracks to direct commercial vessels farther offshore. Please refer to Chapter 4, Vessel Traffic Safety, paragraph (1)(d) for details.

When engaged in transit of the central California coast, all vessels carrying oil or hazardous materials as cargo, or those carrying large volumes of bunker fuel, are urged to transit as far from shore as weather and operations permit, and in any event navigate with particular caution, with due regard for the devastating consequences of spilled oil in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

\*NOTE: In the Monterey Sanctuary it is illegal to operate personal watercraft (e.g. Jet Skis, Wet Bikes, Surf Jets, and speed boats less than 13 feet) except in designated areas off Pillar Point, Santa Cruz, Moss Landing, and Monterey.

### MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



## **17)FLOOD WARNINGS**

During flood conditions additional precautions are necessary for safe navigation. Flood flows can cause greatly increased currents, particularly during the ebbs. Channels sometimes shift and obstructions become covered with floodwaters. Trees and other shoreline growth and debris are carried into the streams creating additional hazards. Docks and pilings become submerged and aids to navigation may be submerged, carried off station, or rendered inoperative due to flooding. Bridge clearances may be reduced from the charted clearances due to abnormally high water levels. If a waterway is affected by flooding, proceed with caution or do not use the waterway.

## **18)UNSTABLE HARBOR ENTRANCES**

Several small craft harbors in Southern California frequently experience severe wave action and shoaling conditions in the entrance channels. As a result, buoys located in the harbor areas often shift. Where these conditions exist, notes are shown on the appropriate NOS charts of the areas, published in the Coast Guard Light List, Volume VI and in U.S. Coast Pilot 7, Pacific Coast. **Mariners unfamiliar with these harbors should contact local agencies via VHF-FM radio on the frequencies listed in the Coast Pilot before arrival or departure for up-to-date information on local conditions.**